Blowing Raspberry zine #01

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PROLOGUE

For quite some time, I've felt a growing sense of dissatisfaction every time I finish a project. Old materials that should've been released months ago kept getting delayed mostly because I lost the energy to write, to read, to care.

Daily life turned into duty. I often call myself a robot working eight hours a day, six days a week. That's the routine I repeat, like clockwork. Outside those hours, in between wasted moments, I usually laze around in my room, or occasionally wander outside. Then morning comes, and the same rhythm loops again. For weeks, this zine slipped from my mind completely.

This zine is both a personal journal and a space to promote the other projects I've been working on. Yes, I make music using AI. I know many people still don't agree with it. It's a debate. But maybe I see it differently. And if you don't? Let's talk about it.

Why AI music? Because for once, I feel like all the rants, essays, poems, and scribbled notes I've hoarded for years on my computer finally have a voice. I've turned many of those writings into lyrics. Since today's generation spends more time on YouTube than reading blogs or books, I figured if no one's reading my words, maybe they'll listen to them instead.

To close, I'll just say thank you.
Enjoy the read.

- Rupa Pradana -

The playlist that accompanies the making of this zine :

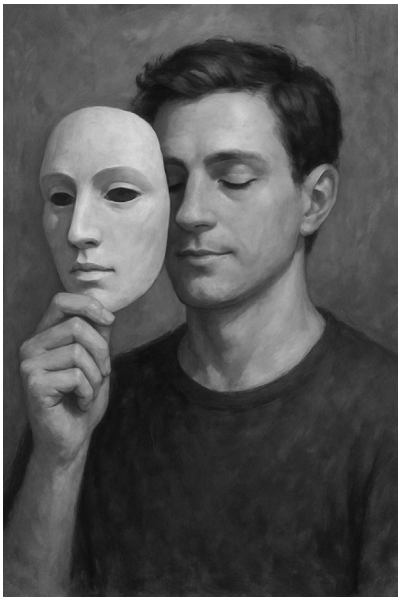
1. Shenseea - Hit & Run
2. Queen Omega - No Love Dubplate
3. Lisa - Dream
4. Neoni - Wonderland
5. Kygo - Firestone
6. Chromatic Journey - Xylophone Daydreams
7. Soko - I Kill Her
8. Club 8 - December
9. Blowing Raspberry - Portal Star
10. Regina Spektor - Better

Authenticity: The Courage to Be Ourselves

It is never easy for someone who has attained a certain status to present themselves as they truly are without masks, without pretense. Once a person reaches the peak of their social environment through title, achievements, or wealth many things that once felt natural suddenly become “inappropriate,” “improper,” or “unacceptable.”

Think about it:
Is it unbecoming for a king to mop his own palace floors?
Is it strange for a priest to enjoy EDM music?
Is it wrong for a famous actress to appear in public without makeup?

In my opinion, not at all.



Being true to oneself is a challenge. Truly. There’s the fear of judgment, of being ridiculed, misunderstood, or excluded. These are real risks. Yet constantly trying to be someone else to appear flawless, kind, pure all the time carries an even greater cost. It is exhausting. It suppresses our inner peace and distances us from joy.

As long as a person is honest with themselves and feels at ease with their choices, that is what matters.

We pay far too high a price for image for the mask we wear while forgetting to nurture our inner character and authenticity.

But we still have the right to break free from those chains, to shed the masks we wear in front of the mirror. Our lives will not crumble simply because others discover that our farts smell, that we drool in our sleep, or pick our noses while watching TV. These so called imperfections are, in fact, deeply human.

Our inner voice has been lonely for too long.
It’s time to come home to who we truly are.

The Silent Hero (Portal Star)

I still remember the sound of my father's footsteps as he left the house at dawn. Back in the 1990s, he worked as a postman. Rain or shine, he walked through neighborhoods carrying letters that weren't just paper they were stories, emotions, and memories. To many, he was just "the mailman." But to me, and to the people quietly waiting behind their doors, he was something more: a silent hero.

In the heart of the city, where people rush past each other without a second glance, postmen like him moved with purpose. He wasn't flashy, and he didn't seek attention. But each envelope he delivered brought joy, sometimes sorrow, and always connection. That's what I admired the most. While the world grew louder and faster, he moved at his own rhythm steady, dependable, almost invisible. But he mattered.

Those tall buildings, endless streets, and crowded blocks were part of his daily route. I imagine his steps between skyscrapers, like a soft heartbeat in a city that rarely pauses. Every door he knocked on held a different story. Maybe a birthday card from a sister overseas. Maybe bad news, too. And he carried it all without judgment, without delay.

Even in harsh weather scorching sun or heavy rain he never stopped. He never complained. For him, it was more than a job. It was a kind of service. And in a way, I think he felt proud knowing that someone, somewhere, was waiting for him.

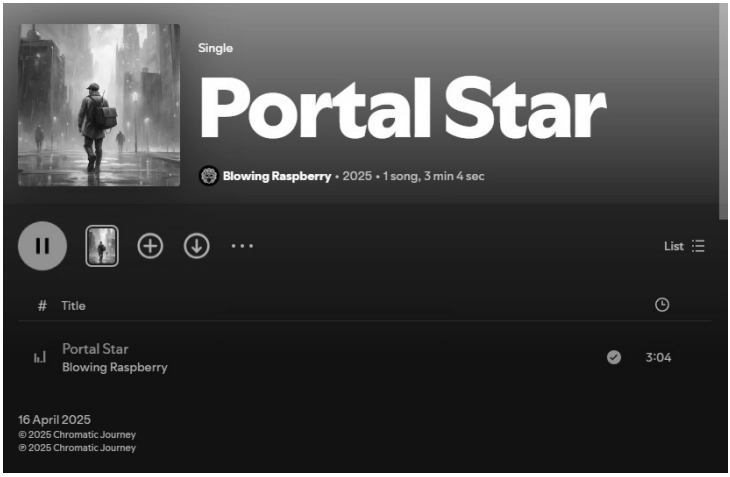
These days, people don’t talk much about postmen. The world has gone digital. Messages are instant. Letters are rare. But there was a time when a handwritten note meant everything, and the person who delivered it was part of that meaning. For couples in long distance love, for families separated by borders, the postman was the bridge.

"Portal Star," the song that inspired this piece, describes the postman as a glowing figure moving through the city a messenger who opens a portal between hearts. That image speaks to me. My father was that kind of man. Quiet but essential. Ordinary, but unforgettable.

To the new generations, the idea of waiting days for a message might feel foreign. But for some of us, those moments were magic. And behind each of those moments stood someone like my father.

So here’s to the postmen especially those from decades past. You may not trend on social media or get hashtags in your honor, but your work touched lives. And for one boy in the 1990s, you were a star.

Thank you, dear postmen.



Listen to songs :
https://open.spotify.com/album/2nxyufjXEFdSlTvHjubMS5?si=xm18JqeLT_OOal3-RqcaSw

Hey Jude
(The Beatles)

In 1968, John Lennon was living with Yoko Ono and preparing to divorce his wife, Cynthia Lennon. Paul McCartney, feeling concerned and sympathetic, was moved to comfort John and Cynthia's young son, Julian. During a drive to visit them, Paul began composing a song for Julian titled "Hey Jules."

Hey Jules,
don't make it bad
Take a sad song and make it better

At the time, Cynthia Lennon was surprised when Paul McCartney stopped by her home with a single rose in hand and shared a few lighthearted jokes. She was deeply touched by Paul's care and compassion. "I will never forget Paul's kindness and support during that difficult period," she later said. "His presence made me feel seen and cared for, at a time when we felt abandoned and invisible."

Eventually, Paul changed the song's title to "Hey Jude." Interestingly, Julian didn't find out the song was written for him until twenty years later. However, he admitted that during that period of his childhood, he actually felt closer to Paul than to his own father.

Ironically, John Lennon himself initially thought the song had been dedicated to him.

Julian Lennon

Bullshit of My Monday Activity

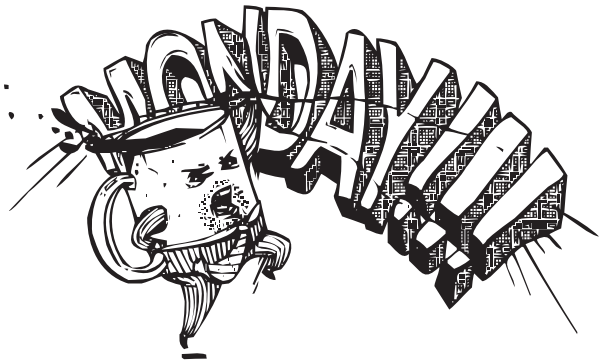
When Sunday is down to its final moments those last few seconds before midnight, I always find myself hoping, “Please let tomorrow be a holiday!”

Who actually likes Mondays? Just like most people, I feel the pressure of jumping back into work right after the weekend. Monday mornings are always rushed, and Monday afternoons are always a mess. Honestly, I can only breathe a little easier once Monday night rolls around. To me, Monday feels like a day packed with stress, full of mental weight and physical exhaustion.

If there’s someone out there who genuinely enjoys Mondays, I’d really love to be like them. I feel like I need to learn from those who stay calm in traffic jams, or those who manage to be energetic while rushing to work, or those who don’t get stressed even when they’re racing against the clock. Mondays just hit me differently, I don’t even know why, because my activities aren’t all that different from any other day.

Maybe it’s the leftover laziness from the weekend that makes Monday feel like a burden. It’s strange because other weekdays can be just as busy, but there’s something about Monday that feels heavier. Perhaps it’s the contrast coming off a fun, relaxing weekend makes getting back into the grind feel twice as hard. One day off just isn’t enough to refresh a brain that’s slowly aging and losing its sharpness.

Honestly, who wouldn't be happy if Monday were a day off?



History of Dancehall Music

Dancehall music is a rhythm-heavy subgenre of reggae that has won fans across the globe. Learn about the subgenre's history, sounds, and major players.

What Is Dancehall?

Dancehall is a form of Jamaican popular music that emerged from that country's fertile and diverse music industry in the late 1970s. Dancehall music borrowed the sinuous rhythms of reggae music but replaced its spirited live musicians with prerecorded or digitally composed tracks built on pure, driving grooves. The subgenre also embraced lyrical content that celebrated earthly pleasures over the spiritual and mystical language of traditional or roots reggae.

Dancehall's popularity grew beyond the borders of Jamaica, bringing worldwide attention to dancehall artists like Sean Paul, Beenie Man, and Lady Saw, while pop stars such as Drake and Rihanna earned their own hits with the dancehall sound.

A Brief History of Dancehall Music The history of dancehall music began in Jamaica in the late 1960s:

Roots: Dancehall music takes its name from the dance halls that held dances in inner-city sections of metropolitan areas, like Kingston, during the 1950s and 1960s. Music at dance halls came from local sound systems, which consisted of a generator, a turntable, and large, portable speakers overseen by a selector, who played early forms of reggae such as rocksteady and ska and R&B from the United States The DJ's role in a sound system was to create new lyrics for instrumental songs, called riddimsa pronunciation of "rhythms" with a Jamaican patois in a delivery style similar to rapping in hip-hop. The practice, known as toasting, made stars of DJs, such as Count Machuki, Sugar Minott, and U-Roy.

First records: Noting the popularity of sound systems, Jamaican music producers like Duke Reid and Henry "Junjo" Lawes created the first dancehall recordings in the 1970s by taking existing instrumental songs or passages from songs with vocals and rerecording new vocals with other singers and deejays. Performers like Barrington Levy, Gregory Isaacs, and Junior Reid rose to fame with these early dancehall cuts.

Changes: By the 1980s, performers like Yellowman and U-Roy created the template for modern Jamaican dancehall music. Songs featured toasting over hard-driving prerecorded tracks drawn from vintage reggae recordings. Lyrics focused on salacious topics a feature borrowed from early Caribbean popular music forms like calypso and mento which became known as slackness. These elements drew a definitive line between dancehall reggae and the socially and spiritually conscious music of roots reggae, which musicians like Bob Marley performed.

Digital: Dancehall moved even further away from roots reggae when producers like King Jammy created songs using electronic instruments instead of older recordings with analog instruments and faster beats. Jammy scored a huge hit in 1985 with the saucy "(Under Me) Sleng Teng," which marked the beginning of the digital dancehall or ragga subgenre.

Superstars: The 1990s saw the rise of many of dancehall's biggest names, including Shabba Ranks and Bounty Killer. Lyrics celebrating slackness dominated their recordings, though some artists, like Buju Banton and Mavado, also extolled "rude boy" behavior like gunplay and marijuana use. Countering these tracks was a wave of music by female dancehall artists like Sister Nancy, Lady Saw, and Lady G.

Modern: Dancehall moved into the global market in the new millennium. Artists like Sean Paul, who scored chart hits in the United States and other markets with his 2003 single "Get Busy," paved the way for other dancehall artists like Elephant Man, Spice, Aidonia, and Vybz Kartel. Their recordings moved away from slackness and folded pop and dance music elements into their sound.

Throwback sound: Some dancehall artists, including Banton and Sizzla, reached back to the 1970s to embrace Rastafarian ideals in their songs. These and other artists drew attention from pop stars like Justin Bieber and Rihanna, who released music inspired by their sounds. Canadian rapper Drake has released a string of dancehall-styled hits, including 2016's "Controlla."

3 Characteristics of Dancehall Music

Several distinct characteristics define the sound of dancehall music, including:

1. Lyrics: The lyrical content of dancehall music was one of the primary ways the genre distinguished itself from roots reggae. It replaced celebrations of Jah (God) and political discussion with subjects that drew parallels to some hip-hop styles: An outlaw mentality and a focus on racy subject matter defined the majority of dancehall lyrics.

2. Hybrid elements: Early dancehall featured performers toasting or singing over prerecorded tracks drawn from the vast catalogs of Jamaican record labels like Studio One. Digital dancehall, or ragga, featured original compositions recorded on electronic equipment, which dominated dancehall in the 1980s and 1990s. Modern dancehall is a hybrid of dancehall rhythms and hip-hop and R&B beats from the United States.

3. Reuse: Numerous artists use riddims, which are the rhythm tracks used in dancehall music, on different recordings. A single riddim, like the one featured in "(Under Me) Sleng Teng)" by Wayne Smith, fueled a dozen or more original songs. The riddim that anchored 1967's "Real Rock" had appeared in more than 250 songs by 2006. This unique practice harkens back to the origins of dancehall, which featured a deejay toasting live over the selector's albums.

4 Notable Dancehall Artists

There are many notable dancehall artists in the genre's five-decade history, including:

1. Buju Banton: One of dancehall's most acclaimed artists, Buju Banton has enjoyed considerable success throughout his career. His recording career began in the 1980s but exploded with the back-to-back releases of Stamina Daddy and Mr. Mention in 1992. The latter LP broke records in Jamaica and earned him a contract with A&M in the United States. Subsequent releases won critical praise, and he helped to reintroduce social and spiritual themes into dancehall. In the 2000s, Banton faced a few legal issues, which overshadowed a Grammy win in 2011 for his album Before the Dawn. However, he reemerged in 2018 and resumed his recording career.

2. Konshens: Born Garfield Spence, the dancehall artist Konshens is a barometer for the global popularity of Jamaican music. He was initially part of a duo, Sojah, with his brother Delus, before striking out as a solo artist. His 2005 single, "Pon di Corner," was a huge hit in Japan, and he remains a major performer there and throughout the Caribbean, Europe, and Guyana. His international fanbase has led to collaborations with numerous artists, including DJ Matoma and Enrique Iglesias on the US Top 40 single "I Don't Dance (Without You)."

3. Popcaan: Singer/songwriter and deejay Popcaan got his big break from another dancehall superstar, Vybz Kartel, who took him under his wing to hone his writing and performing skills. A string of modest hits led to his breakout song, a collaboration with Vybz on "Clarks," which earned major awards from the Jamaican music industry. More hits, including 2012's "Only Man She Want," soon followed, as did team-ups with Drake ("Controlla"), Young Thug, and Gorillaz.

4. Shabba Ranks: Ranks' booming voice dominated dancehall and produced some of its biggest crossover hits in the 1980s and 1990s. Signed to Epic Records after honing his toasting skills on the sound system circuit, Ranks enjoyed modest success until 1991, when his single "Mr. Lover Man" cracked the Top 40 in the United States. He would enjoy even greater success the following year with a Grammy win for his 1992 album As Raw As Ever, which he repeated in 1993 with X-Tra Naked.

“Silent” (Rupa Pradana - 2022)

"Dance of the Ancestors" (Rupa Pradana - 2025)

"Rebel Gyal" (Rupa Pradana - 2025)

"School - Work - Die" (Rupa Pradana - 2025)

"Jungle Queen" (Rupa Pradana - 2025)

ALBUM RELEASE

Blowing Raspberry

Is out now on Spotify and YouTube Music!

Jungle Queen (EP)
5 Dancehall tracks.

℗ *Chromatic Journey*

Released on: 2025-04-25

Programmer: Chromatic Journey
Producer: Rupa Pradana
Lyricist, Composer: Rupa Pradana

Rebel Gyal Anthem (EP)
6 Dancehall tracks.

℗ *Chromatic Journey*

Released on: 2025-05-13

Programmer: Chromatic Journey
Producer: Rupa Pradana
Lyricist, Composer: Rupa Pradana

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